341

perhaps a slight suggestion of this style in the house of the Union of Dairy Companies (Pienocentras).

[349] In the provinces, too, state and communal building activity has been very lively in the last decades. Even to the casual observer who may know Lithuania from the preward period, it should seem remarkable that all along the railroad sections station buildings of stone have replaced the earlier Russian wooden barracks. The impression is strengthened, particularly by a visit to the district cities, for in a few years a whole series of large buildings has arisen here on Western models, above all schools and hospitals of often surprising, though necessary proportions (e.g. in Kėdainiai), and in addition many other public and private buildings. For all /170/ these buildings demonstrate a decisive effort, with the support of proven Western forms, to combine the particular purpose of the building, which is the most essential element, with a harmonious form and an overall aesthetic impression.

[361] The face especially of cities such as Šiauliai, that were completely or partially destroyed in the first World War and were rebuilt in stone has completely changed. Thus the transition to stone construction proceeds in the provinces with greater and greater speed and also reaches into the villages, primarily through the example of those who return from America. This development is hastened by the effort to protect and preserve as much as possible the forests of the country, which are not in themselves large. Perhaps only a few more decades will pass and the "Lithuania of stone" which already plays a great role in architectural discussions will have partially become a reality. The character of the Lithuanian countryside would thereby experience a basic change which is for the moment unimaginable.

133 Neringa* presents a remarkable natural wonder. It is a long strip of earth stretching several tens of kilometers to the south, separating the Baltic Sea from Kurshiu Marios (Courland Spit). It is covered in places by young woodland or low pines, and in some places magnificent sand dunes rise, which around the hamlet of Nida are the highest in Europe. Lithuania's largest river is the Nemunas (Neman). It is navigable from the Alytus. Its most important tributaries inside Lithuania are the Neris (which in turn has its tributaries Shventoiya* and Nevezys), and also the Dubysa and the Sheshupe.

The lowest parts of Lithuania are swampy. There are especially many swamps in the Siauliai area and to the west from the middle of the Nemunas.

137 Wooded surface comprised before the Second World War, 19 percent of the whole Republic. About two-thirds of the woods are coniferous, and about one-third is deciduous. Among the coniferous varieties fir trees and pines predominate. Among the deciduous varieties the ash, the birch, the aspen, and, less often, the alder and oak predominate. The meadows are covered with dense, mellow grass. The natural pastures, and also fodder grass, are the basis for the development of animal husbandry.

132 Owing to the proximity of the sea, the climate is damp and mild. There are no severe winters and no dry winds. The average annual temperature is from plus 6.5° to 7° C.; the average temperature in /5/ January is from minus 2.5° to minus 4.7°; in July it is from plus 17° to 18.6°.

162 The population of Soviet Lithuania (according to the statistics of 1940) is 3,150,000. The bulk of the population consists of Lithuanians (80 per cent). In addition there are Russians, Poles, White Russians, Jews, and Latvians.

631 Administratively Soviet Lithuania is divided into 41 uyezds, 320 volosts, and 2,774 apilinks (selsoviets).

• 361 The capital of the Republic is Vilnius. The city of Vilnius was founded in the tenth century and has been the capital since 1323. It is situated at the junction of the rivers Vilnele (Vileika) and Neris, on the shores of both rivers.

The largest cities of the Republic are Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Paniveshis.

135 In the Republic there are rich resources in water power, of peat and mineral construction material.

Le 665

cultural life. The lack of communist intellectuals made itself felt not only in the narrow sphere of university life from which professors imbued with 'bourgeois anti-scientific ideas' could not be ousted quickly enough, but it also put a brake on 're-education' in the Soviet sense of the masses of the Latvian people.[38]

LITHUANIA: BOTH ALLY AND VICTIM

Li. 648 [181]

In terms of geography the Soviet Baltic Republics are not fully identical with the 'bourgeois' Baltic States. Both Estonia and Latvia have each lost to the R.S.F.S.R. border territories of about 800 square miles. Soviet Lithuania, however, has added to her pre-September 1939 territory 3,200 square miles in the east and more than 1,000 square miles in the south.

This difference in treatment seems clearly to indicate that the U.S.S.R. considered Lithuania useful from the point of view of Soviet foreign policy, whereas Estonia and Latvia were from the Soviet Russian standpoint no more than internal problems of the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, her geographical position made Lithuania much more valuable to Russia than Estonia and Latvia. Lithuania had common frontiers with two big European nations, Poland and Germany. Russia had thus an obvious interest in using Lithuania against both of them as a pawn in the diplomatic and military game.

This is why relations between Russia and Lithuania during the inter-war period were on a different footing from Russian-Latvian or Russian-Estonian relations. In Soviet eyes Lithuania was an oppressed nation deserving sympathy ever since Poland had wrested from her the city of Vilnius (Vilna in Russian, Wilno in Polish) by a *coup de force* in November 1920. This feeling was but little affected by the fact that the country was ruled most of the time by right-wing régimes which oppressed the local communists.

A Comintern appeal to the world proletariat, issued in 1928 in defence of Lithuanian independence, was perhaps the most striking evidence of the special position which Lithuania occupied among the Baltic States with regard to her relations with Russia. The appeal in question, adopted by the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, referred to the hostile intentions which the Polish Marshal Pilsudsky never ceased to harbour against the small Lithuanian State and called upon the workers of Poland, Britain, France and Germany to give unrestricted support to the Lithuanian workers and peasants.

Li. 648 361

The Soviet Government always considered that Vilna should belong to Lithuania, it being her historical capital, even though the Lithuanians formed only a tiny percentage of its population. When Russia and Lithuania concluded the peace treaty of September 28th, 1920, the

[Cf. car. 116, p. 116, R1 Sov. Union, 21: Kolarz -- Analyst]

Soviet Government allocated to Lithuania the city and district of Vilna, and thereafter the Russian attitude never wavered in its opposition to the Polish annexation of the Vilna area.

Lithuania also never recognized the loss of her capital and gratefully acknowledged the Soviet attitude in a question in which the entire Lithuanian national prestige was engaged. Lithuania therefore refused to join any anti-Soviet coalition. As early as 1923 she reacted favourably to a Russian offer of a guarantee pact, and in 1926 the Soviet-Lithuanian Guarantee Treaty was signed, the first to be concluded by Russia with one of her western neighbours. In October 1939, Russia having, in co-operation with Germany, liquidated the Polish Republic, handed over to Lithuania the long-coveted Vilna district. According to Polish statistics the territory which had been added to the Lithuanian Republic had over 500,000 inhabitants, of whom 11·3 per cent were Lithuanians, 3·3 per cent Jews, 2·5 per cent Byelorussians and 69·2 per cent Poles. In the town of Vilna itself at the time of the Polish census in 1931, only 1 per cent of all inhabitants gave Lithuanian as their mother tongue; and even as late as 1943 Lithuanians accounted for only 21·7 per cent of Vilna's population. By giving Vilna to Lithuania the Soviet Government made a present which cost them nothing. Indeed, Vilna turned out to be a present given by Russia to Russia. Nine months after the incorporation of Vilna into Lithuania the Soviet Union not only recovered that city but annexed the whole of Lithuania through its transformation into a Soviet Republic. A popular Lithuanian saying gives the whole situation in a nut-shell:'Vilnius is ours, but Lithuania is Russia's'.

Not only the Soviet occupation as such but also the shifting of the capital from Kaunas (Kovno) to Vilna, is detrimental to the interests of the Lithuanian people. While Kaunas, the emergency capital of the inter-war period, was located in the very centre of the Lithuanian 'living-space', Vilna is situated at the ethnical border between Lithuanians and Byelorussians, and is thus strongly exposed to Slav influence.

From the Russian point of view Lithuanian national aspirations not only represented a useful pretext for pressing Poland back to the west, but they also helped towards the establishment of the 'unity of the Njeman valley'. The Njeman – called Memel by the Germans and Nemunas by the Lithuanians – has its source in Byelorussia and is an important means of communication for the Russian timber export trade. Up to 1945 Russia had never controlled the entire course of the river. In Czarist times the mouth of the Njeman was in German hands. In the inter-war period its middle course belonged to Poland, while its mouth had a dramatic history. In January 1923 Lithuania occupied the river mouth together with the port and district of Memel (Klaipeda in Lithuanian), a territory with 150,000 inhabitants, most of them German-